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History of STM 140.628
What is the Cultural History of Medicine (Science and Technology)?

This graduate seminar explores the impact of cultural history on the histories of medicine, science, and technology. At the heart of the project of cultural history, I would suggest, is the historical quest for the making of meanings. How did people in the past make sense of the world around them? This question has re-oriented a number of historical emphases. Cultural historians, for example, are as interested in reception or consumption as in production. Building upon social history and 'history from below', cultural history enquires into the mental worlds of peasants as well as philosophers. Literary historians have begun to develop a kind of cultural materialism which explores the meanings of material objects – a topic richly explored by anthropologists. A particular moment in cultural anthropology has also been the inspiration for historical studies of rituals and riots as texts or as highly patterned activities whose meanings can be decoded and analyzed.

We begin by reading a few classics in cultural history and then pursue some of these themes as they have been developed in histories of medicine, science, and technology. Our meetings will be devoted to discussions of the readings and to the development of individual research papers. Books marked * have been ordered and are in the bookstore.

Jan. 29 Introductory meeting

Feb. 5 **Classics 1: Microhistory**

*Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller* translated by John and Anne Tedeschi, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

For history of medicine microhistories, see:

Harold Cook, *Trials of an Ordinary Doctor: Joannes Groenevelt in Seventeenth-century London*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Guido Ruggiero, "The Strange Death of Margarita Marcellini: *Male*, Signs and the Everyday World of Pre-modern Medicine", *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), pp. 1141-1158.

Feb. 12 **Classics 2: Ethnohistory and its Critics**

Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight", ch. 15 of *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 412-453.

Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin" in his *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French History*, New York: Vintage Books, 1985 (first publ 1984), pp. 75-106.

Roger Chartier, "Texts, Symbols, and Frenchness", *Journal of Modern History* 57 (1985), pp. 682-95, and Darnton's reply, "The Symbolic Element in History", *Journal of Modern History* 58 (1986), pp. 218-234.

Dominick LaCapra, "Chartier, Darnton, and the Great Symbol Massacre", *Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988), pp. 95-112.

James Fernandez, "Historians tell Tales: Of Cartesian Cats and Gallic Cockfights", *Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988), pp. 113-127.

Although you don't have to read it for class, you may also want to know of Harold Mah, "Suppressing the Text: The Metaphysics of Ethnographic History in Darnton's Great Cat Massacre", *History Workshop Journal* no. 31 (1991), pp. 1-20.

Feb. 19 **Rethinking Oral History**

Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, pp. 1-26.

Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia. Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997, pp. 140-60.

Luise White, *Speaking With Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 3-55.

Lynn Marie Pohl, "Long Waits, Small Spaces, and Compassionate Care: Memories of Race and Medicine in a Mid-Twentieth-Century Southern Community", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 74, (2000), pp. 107-137.

Kate Fisher, "'She Was Quite Satisfied with the Arrangements I Made': Gender and Birth Control in Britain 1920-1950", *Past & Present* no. 169, (2000), pp. 161-93.

Feb. 26 **Appropriating and Consuming**

Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History: the Cultures of Dependence*, London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 37-55.

Ronald Kline and Trevor Pinch, "Users as Agents of Technological Change: The Social Construction of the Automobile in the Rural United States", *Technology and Culture* 37 (1996), pp. 763-795.

Roger Chartier, "Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France" in Steven L. Kaplan, ed., *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1984, pp. 175-191.

Students introduce their research topics.

March 6 **Thinking About Things**

Debora Shuger, "The 'I' of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind", in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt, Philadelphia: University Of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, pp. 21-41.

Diane Owen Highes, "Distinguishing Signs: Ear-rings, Jews and Franciscan Rhetoric in the Italian Renaissance City", *Past & Present* no. 112 (1986), pp. 3-59.

Joel Pfister, "A Garden in the Machine: Reading a Mid-19th-Century Parlor Stove as Cultural Text", *Technology in Society* 13, (1991), pp. 327-43.

Steven Lubar, "Culture and Technological Design in the 19th-Century Pin Industry: John Howe and the Howe Manufacturing Company", *Technology and Culture* 28 (1987), pp. 253-282.

Sara Pennell, "'Pots and Pan History': the Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England", *Journal of Design History* 11 (1998), pp. 201-26.

No class March 19 – Spring Break.

March 26 **Metaphors and Bodies**

*Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*
New York : Basic Books, 1990.

April 2 **Presentation of Paper Outlines**

April 9 **More Bodies**

*Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo*, Durham, NC : Duke University Press, 1999.

April 16 **Gendering Technology**

Ruth Oldenziel, *Making Technology Masculine. Men, Women, and Machines in America, 1870-1945*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 1999.

April 23 **Narratives**

Giulia Calvi, *Histories of a Plague Year: the Social and the Imaginary in Baroque Florence*, translated by Dario Biocca and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989 (first published in Italian 1984).

William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative", *Journal of American History*, 78, (1992), pp. 1347-1376. On JSTOR; Stable URL:
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8723%28199203%2978%3A4%3C1347%3AAPFSNH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-H>

April 30 **Presentation of papers.**

